

The Glasgow Keelie

No. 3 *The Salt of the Earth* July 1990



SINATRA

Me? In the Mafia? I've never been a Glasgow District Councillor...

Defend Elspeth King

DEFEND THE PEOPLE'S CULTURE

THE DECISION of Pat Lally's stooge Julian Spalding to insult the integrity of Elspeth King, Curator of the People's Palace, by overstepping her for the 'new' post of Social History is shameful.

Her reputation and record in this field in unparalleled in Scotland and she is internationally respected as far as Australia, as her recent invitation to make the main speech to their museum conference showed.

What heinous crime did Elspeth King commit: did she fiddle her expenses? Did she do a bit of asset stripping on the side? Did she attend too many lunches or dinners that many sponsors put on for the Year of Culture in the Forum Hotel or the Albany? Did she jostle a councillor trying to get into the banqueting hall at the City Chambers? Did she have too many secret meetings with developers that see Glasgow Green as the most valuable piece of real estate in Glasgow?

PRICELESS

She did none of these things in her own modest and unassuming way she built up a priceless collection of Glasgow's history that most people are proud of. Elspeth's only fault: she was naive enough to expect that this would be appreciated by Glasgow District Council; how wrong she was. How could she compete with the sharp expensive suited representatives of the big developers that walk the corridors of power in the City Chambers?

The treatment of Elspeth King is a disgrace to a city named as Culture City 1990 and it will sully Glasgow's name for a long time.



Lally

by Freddy Anderson

Who ever chose you to be
a Glasgow councillor of sham democracy?
You arose on the poor folk's inadequacy,
Hoping, mere hoping, that Labour be better than Tory,
Yet you and your cronies carry on the same old story of
betrayal -
It's not merely Glasgow Green or the courage of Elspeth King,
Your actions ring more of MacDonald
Traitors decades ago - and that is the core of my poem,
You change a street name to Mandela
Yet act as a tyrant at home.

The Curse of The Keelie

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

FIRST the good news: in spite of every effort being made by our 'Equal Opportunities' District Council to spread the culture jam to the Julia Morleys of this world, you'll be pleased to know we'll be spared the sight of Salvador Lally crowning Miss World in his new Palais.

Now the bad news: Frank Sinatra is coming, in spite of poor ticket sales.

In an exclusive interview specially taped for *The Keelie*, Mugsy Balone, Frankie's agent, told Bob Da Palma: "Your 400 grand was an offer we couldn't refuse. We're sure we'll feel at home in Glasgow. With land sales, loan sharks and 'forward thinking' politicians, it gets more and more like Atlantic City."

"Your City Boss sure has made it into our kinda town. The FAMILY (Fine Arts Mob In Lally's Year) are flying over from Palermo to Ibrox to celebrate the glorious 10th July. Great doing business wid youse guys!"

PALMER AND WALLACE TO JOIN THE ELSPETH KING PEOPLE'S PROTEST!!!

by Rank Badyin

"I have in front of me a handbill with the title 'Defend Elspeth King', and I am most disturbed by a totally inaccurate statement which it contains. You state that Ms King's work 'is not popular with the city of culture officials'. I believe this comment is wholly inaccurate, does not reflect the views of myself or my colleagues, and for this reason is entirely misleading."

Robert Palmer, Director of Festivals

"My respect for Elspeth King's professional work, achievements, knowledge and scholarship knows no bounds..."

Neil Wallace, Depute Director of Festivals

Keelies are now wondering if the Director and Depute Director of the Festivals Unit Glasgow 1990 are set to throw their considerable weight behind the people's protest in defence of Elspeth King!

Other Keelies are asking if Mr Palmer and Mr Wallace are unofficially intimating their desire to join the Campaign Committee on Ms King's behalf!

The first step is to sign the petition!

Read *The Keelie* for further shock horror developments!

PASSPORT TO LOCHEND

THE people of Lochend in Easterhouse recently declared themselves independent.

A proclamation declared: "We do solemnly swear to remain steadfast in our constant battle against authority; particularly Sheriff's Officers, DSS snoopers and Big Tommy the Tickman."

Visitors from 'the neighbouring city state of Glasgow' were issued 'with visitors' passports and welcomed to the Independence Day celebrations.



RAVENSCRAIG: ANOTHER SELL-OUT?

ONCE AGAIN we are back to the drawing board in the fight to retain the Ravenscraig complex: this despite all the production records and all the phoney praise.

Surely the workers at this steel works and elsewhere will now have learned something in the last decade as they have watched the Scottish industrial base decimated by the multi national companies, ably assisted by both Tory and Labour governments.

Remember Linwood, Scotland's first and last car plant? Remember shipyards like Stephens, John Brown's, Barclay Curle's and the UCS? Remember Caterpillar and Gartcosh?

Did all-party/STUC verbal campaigns to 'change the Tories' minds' save a single job?

Wasn't the closure of Ravenscraig always part of the Tories' plan when they privatised

British Steel and appointed Scholey to maximise profit under market forces?

In all the above closures (and it is only a handful, there were hundreds more) in the overwhelming majority the firm or its work was transferred down south to England or abroad. Surely this should direct the workers' attention to the whole question of how big a cog they really are in the big monopoly wheel.

Significantly the industrial struggle that came nearest to victory was the miners' strike. Despite the whole might of the state from the police to the courts along with Her Majesty's shadow cabinet lead by Kinnock to the Trade Union Congress the one thing that defeated them was disunity. If the miners had not been divided by Thatcher's stooges in Nottingham and elsewhere they were very near to victory, as admitted by

McGregor the ex Coal Board chairman in his memoirs.

So the one thing rank and file steel workers should not forget is the need for united action at shop floor level and in every section of the steel industry up to and including international solidarity with steel workers world wide. You have more in common with a steel worker in South Africa than you have with Scholey.

They will try to buy you off with generous redundancy payments, although even these are declining as Thatcher tries to solve her economic problems at the workers expense.

Stop being reasonable start being awkward, it's your job that is on the line: it's your family that will suffer. Above all do not let any politician Tory or Labour or even Scot-Nat, use your fight for survival as a stepping stone to a political career. Do not forget former shop stewards like Airlie and Reid who built a reputation, then a career, while the workers went down the road to the 'brood'.

There is quite a debate going on about Scotland being part of Europe, we should remember that we have the lowest paid workers in Europe along with the lowest pensions and lowest social security benefits. No doubt that is one reason why Thatcher does not want the Social Charter to be part of her price for joining the E.E.C. In or out of Europe we have got to stop accepting crumbs from the monopoly capitalist table, start raising some of the demands of past socialist pioneers, like: 'Full Employment or Full Maintenance'.

Why should the workers pick up the tab for the failure of the bosses to invest in new plant? Why should the workers be responsible for the incompetence of the employers and above all why should decisions taken about your future be decided by a bingo hall called the stock exchange?

Now is the time for Ravenscraig workers to take action in defence of their jobs! Now is the time to set up 'steelworkers' support groups in every area!

SHERIFF SHOWDOWN

Sheriff Officers in Paisley got a shock recently when they turned up to poind the goods of a woman in Foxbar, Paisley.

Two hundred anti Poll Tax demonstrators had shown up in support, and the angry crowd sent them away with a flea in their ear.

All the streets leading to the house were blockaded and every motorist entering was made to show I.D.

**photo: 'Er ... excuse me, I must go and change my trousers...'*

SOMEWHERE IN ENGLAND ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON

THE Glasgow Herald recently published a letter from a certain Gillian Tait in support of Julian Spalding, the much-criticised Director of Museums. It turns out she is his girlfriend. But The Keelie can go one better: we've got a letter from his mummy ...

Dear Sir/Madam,

The recent furore over certain democratic decisions made by my son in the interests of economy, efficiency, and a quiet life, does Glasgow's reputation as Cultural Capital of Europe no good whatsoever. If the slogan referred to Glasgow as Cultural Labour of Europe these allegations of impropriety might begin to hold water as well as my son holds his own. However, the emphasis is on Capital, something Julian has stashed away in a Swiss account, true European that he is.

As for Culture, when will you lot learn that it is a privilege and not a right? If Julian wishes to attract business to your village green, then that's his business, and I would ask you, on his behalf, as well as his behind, not to stick your nose in where it doesn't belong. Mr Lally is doing a grand job. And when he's finished he'll no doubt wipe himself on another member of his workforce.

Julian is totally committed to getting the best out of your city, or any other city for that matter, not to mention the money. My son has never forgotten his roots. He does them every six weeks. Whatever happened in Manchester, it is in the past. Let us look to the future and a slimmer, fitter, more streamlined Clydeside. Glasgow may have lost a woman, but it has gained a son. Mine, King is dead. Long live the Capital!

Yours for an exorbitant salary.

GLASGOW GLASGOW

(Tune: Chicago Chicago)

'For Frankie-Boy Sinatra'

O it's Glasgow, it's Glasgow
Where it's all going on
It's Glasgow, it's Glasgow
Where it's one big con

Merchanty-wrasslers ur on the loose
In old Glasgow, old Glasgow
Where it's culture tae order
Wi' profit the vulture - sure

And on mean street where they all cheat
They're rakin it in
Such easy meat for the elite
Who know how tae win

So don't vote for Labour
Or you'll get the blues
In Glasgow, in Glasgow
Where there's welders as waiters
And working-class traitors too

O it's Glasgow, it's Glasgow
Where it's all going on
It's Glasgow, it's Glasgow
Where it's one big con

Schemes and skyscrapers ur all the rage
In Glasgow, old Glasgow
If you ignore the dampness
And the loneliness - too

In Castlemilk or Easterhouse
Thir's no much tae choose
Real high oan the dope wi'oot any hope
Or oan the booze

So don't vote for Labour
Or you'll get the blues
In Glasgow, old Glasgow
Where cooncillors are chancers
As well as fan-dancers - too

O it's Glasgow, it's Glasgow ...

Jack Withers

RECYCLED WORKERS

"SINCE all the political parties have taken up the green issue we've been met by a barrage of 'conserve this' and 'recycle that'. Yet our society continues to be a throwaway one, the most abused 'commodity' being the disposable worker."

The Hackney Heckler

A SQUARE MILE OF STRUGGLE

**A Guided Walk around the Workers City
MONDAY 9TH JULY
Meet Scotia Bar
Stockwell St 7.00pm**



THE WORKERS CITY

by
JAMES D. YOUNG

THE NO Mean City of no mean socialist educators and agitators has always had an internationalist outlook.

Crammed between Paris in 1989 and Dublin in 1991, Glasgow – at present the city of European capitalist ‘culture’ – has had historic links with both of those cities of European worker’s culture for more than a century.

Over a hundred years ago refugees from the bloody and brutal repression of the Paris Commune sought political asylum in the poor but generous and hospitable communities of the workers’ Glasgow. Inside working-class Glasgow the refugees from the workers’ suppressed Government in Paris made their own contribution to the cumulative growth of socialist ideas and attitudes. At the same time, they were joined by French glassblowers whose distinctive ideas about capitalist injustice were well received in the no mean workers’ communities.

Going Potty for Pavarotti

IT IS never an unusual sight to see the ‘operatti’ alight from the same limousines as the ‘glitteratti’ and stroll, with a confident aloofness, the dozen or so steps to the theatre door.

Not for them the breathless hurry to catch as many moments as possible of their hero. Heroes don’t need heroes, they are used to being entertained, they enjoy the acclaim.

However, in Glasgow ‘a claim’ means something else and with a lotty Pavarotti going on there was a real cultural square-go on the cards . . . and Glasgow won . . . almost like the Clydeside getting revenge as the Finnieston Crane chilled the party-goers with the shadow of its grin.

Cummerbunds were drawn tight and designer frocks flounced as the opera buffs jostled with the spiverratti and the Lallyratti in the brisk greyness of The Workers City.

The S.E.C.C. wasn’t built for such lofty occasions and the thousands of ticket-holders seemed very self-conscious, almost wanting, as they trudged from railways-stations, bus stops and far flung car-parks.

Oh for the Buchanan Street Opera house. Their out-of-placeness was strikingly mirrored by the Forum Tower which seemed unable to decide whether to reflect this new form of import or the empty waters of the Clyde.

We never got the chance of a ticket as they were all snaffled up the agents and promoters like Harvey Goldsmith and their friends. In

But the links between the workers’ Glasgow and Dublin owed a great deal to James Larkin, James Connolly, John Maclean, Harry McShane and many others. As early as the 1850s, the voice of disaffected Irish LABOUR in Glasgow found expression in and through the genius of the poet-pedlar James Macfarlan. In his great poem, the Lords of Labour, and in his essays on judges and police courts, he spoke up in defence on the workers’ Glasgow. The same discontent of the Irish in Glasgow was expressed by the talented Irish novelist Patrick MacGill. Working alongside ‘the great John Maclean’ in the Social Democratic Federation, MacGill expressed the growing *socialist disaffection* of the Irish in Glasgow. The continuity of this tradition is represented today by the Irish poet and novelist Freddy Anderson.

DISAFFECTED

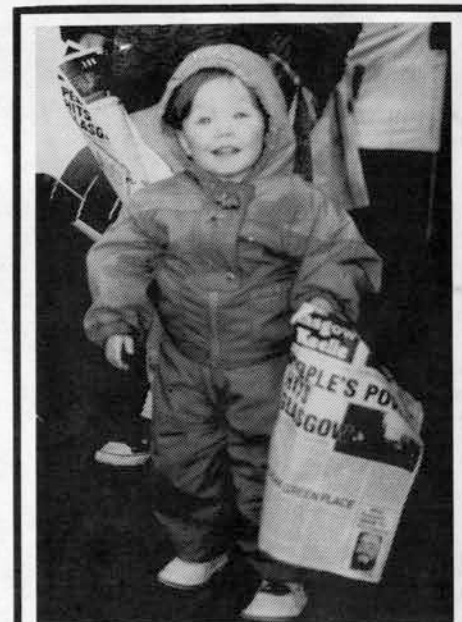
When Glasgow municipal socialism (sic!) was *allegedly* the envy of the world according to the Lib-Lab misleaders of the labour movement, Glaswegian workers suffered from appalling poverty, malnutrition, ill-health and unemployment. Even so, they always tried to assist other workers who were sometimes even worse off than themselves. During the ‘Labour War’ in Dublin in 1913, the workers of Glasgow collected and sent donations – the workers’ pennies – to the poor and exploited in Dublin. In the left-wing socialist newspaper, *Irish Opinion*, the editor Cathal O’Shannon, in the seminal year of 1918 wrote thus: ‘The Glasgow

workers, like those in Dublin, decided to hold May Day this year on the 1st of May, and not the first Sunday. Glasgow and Dublin are the two cities in these countries that lead the van in the militant army of LABOUR, and from them, if from nowhere else, we may expect a bold lead.’

An awareness of Glasgow labour’s historic links with socialist Paris and the workers’ Dublin is not of mere academic interest. It is part of what should be the collective memory of, in Walter Benjamin’s parlance, ‘our enslaved ancestors’. Far from fostering any awareness of those links the so-called Labour administration under Pat Lally are attempting to develop severe amnesia about the real history of the no mean socialist city of Glasgow. The Labour Party’s almost touching support for Thatcherite economic doctrine compels them to re-package Glaswegian workers’ collective memory of past struggles against poverty and unemployment.

But although Glaswegians need a collective memory of Glasgow’s real Glasgow, they should also remember the continuity of Lib-Labism between then and now. Far too often in the past as now so-called Labour men and women have done the bosses’ dirty work. Working people need to develop a new *pride* of where they came from as well as why they are justified in resisting the Poll Tax and other Tory-cum-Labour political measures in the interests of the rich.

A usable past – a meaningful, relevant Labour history – means that the values of authentic socialism need to be fought for and fostered, so that the majority of people can make decisions for fundamental change designed to make the present the past. Therefore LABOUR HISTORY MUSEUMS should not serve as monuments or mausoleums. They should become resource centres to equip those who are struggling to eliminate unemployment, elitist education, poor housing and poverty. And any city aspiring to become a true city of culture should join in the struggle for democratic socialism from *below* from Paris to Glasgow and Dublin and beyond.



**The
Glasgow
Keelie**

WRITE!

Box 239, Glasgow G3 6RA